



Greenwich University

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N.B: This policy may be amended at any time without prior notice. All revisions shall supersede any previous versions and shall take effect immediately upon approval.

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT CELL GREENWICH

UNIVERSITY

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INSTITUTIONALIZING QUALITY OWNERSHIP: INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK *(Aligned with PSG-2023)*

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality Assurance (QA) has become a defining pillar of higher education globally—ensuring academic integrity, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement through systematic evaluation and enhancement of academic and administrative processes.

In Pakistan, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), through its Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), has played a leading role in institutionalizing QA mechanisms by establishing Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) in all Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs). Over time, these structures have laid the foundation for promoting a quality culture across the higher education sector.

With the implementation of the new QA Framework - PSG-2023, HEC envisions a strategic transition from a compliance-based regime to a performance-oriented, evidence-driven, and enhancement-focused system. This transformation underscores the need for a more integrated, adaptive, and contextually relevant framework that supports institutions in improving quality outcomes within their unique capacities and operational contexts.

The proposed Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Framework serves as an operational instrument to translate this vision into practice. It seeks to strengthen the Office of Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE)—formerly QEC—by embedding measurable performance targets, institutional accountability, and a culture of continuous quality improvement (CQI) across all levels of academic, administrative, and strategic planning.

Built upon five foundational pillars—Governance and Leadership, Academic Quality and Effectiveness, Student Experience and Engagement, Digital Transformation and Collaboration, and Faculty and Leadership Development—the framework defines expected outcomes, core expectations, and performance indicators for each domain. Together, these pillars provide a coherent roadmap for DAIs to progressively enhance institutional performance, foster innovation, and align internal QA systems with both national priorities and global higher education standards

2. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES IN PAKISTANI HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Despite notable progress, DAIs across Pakistan continue to face systemic challenges that hinder quality enhancement and institutional maturity. Key challenges include:

- i. **Governance and Policy Gaps** — Weak institutional structures and absence of integrated policy cycles.
- ii. **Reactive QA Systems** — A focus on documentation and compliance rather than evidence-based, enhancement-driven improvement.
- iii. **Fragmented Policy Implementation** — Overlaps and weak policy coherence at the institutional level.

- iv. **Resource and Capacity Constraints** — Limited QA budgets, shortage of trained professionals, ad-hoc based arrangements, and high staff turnover in key positions.
- v. **Limited Faculty and Leadership Development** — Inadequate capacity-building for teaching, management and administrative staff.
- vi. **Data Deficiency and Weak Digital Systems** — Lack of reliable, real-time institutional data for monitoring and decision-making.
- vii. **Inconsistent Program Review Practices** — Uneven program assessment mechanisms across departments.
- viii. **Low Student and Stakeholder Engagement** — Minimal student voice in academic governance and feedback mechanisms.
- ix. **Weak Research and Community Linkages** — Limited collaboration with industry, alumni, and international/national QA bodies.
- x. **Lack of Sustained Quality Culture** — QA is still perceived as an administrative compliance activity rather than a shared institutional value.

3. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

The new Quality Assurance Framework - PSG-2023 calls for a comprehensive, inclusive, and enhancement-driven quality assurance ecosystem across Pakistan's higher education sector. It envisions a transformation from conformity-based reporting and documentation toward proactive institutional development, emphasizing ownership, collaboration, transparency, and accountability at all levels of academic and administrative operations.

The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Assessment Framework translates this vision into an operational model that enables DAIs to progressively strengthen their internal systems in alignment with national priorities and international best practices.

Specifically, the framework seeks to:

- Align institutional QA processes and practices with the guiding principles and expectations of PSG-2023;
- Structure quality enhancement across five interconnected pillars, each addressing critical dimensions of institutional performance;
- Define core benchmarks, performance indicators, and evaluation parameters applicable across diverse institutional contexts; and
- Promote continuous learning and improvement through evidence-based decisionmaking, stakeholder feedback, and shared accountability mechanisms.

Through the adoption of this framework, Pakistani DAIs are expected to evolve into selfevaluating, performance-oriented, and enhancement-driven institutions, contributing directly to the realization of national higher education and socio-economic development goals

4. KEY OBJECTIVES

The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Assessment Framework aims to provide a coherent, adaptive, and evidence-based mechanism to strengthen institutional quality, accountability, and continuous improvement across all Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) in Pakistan. It aligns with the guiding principles of PSG-2023, promoting institutional maturity, inclusivity,

and sustainable excellence through data-driven decision-making and participatory governance.

Specifically, the framework seeks to:

- i. **Institutionalize and Sustain a Quality Culture** — Foster institutional maturity by embedding ownership, accountability, and shared responsibility for quality enhancement across all tiers of academic and administrative functions.
- ii. **Strengthen Governance and Leadership** — Reinforce transparent, data-informed, and participatory governance structures that ensure effective policy implementation, institutional integrity, and evidence-based decision-making.
- iii. **Enhance Academic and Research Quality** — Improve teaching, learning, curriculum relevance, and research outcomes through structured self-assessment, continuous quality improvement (CQI), and alignment with national and global standards.
- iv. **Promote Student-Centric Practices** — Build inclusive, supportive, and engaging learning environments that integrate student voice, feedback, and well-being into institutional policies, academic development, and service delivery.
- v. **Foster Collaboration and Digital Transformation** — Advance digital governance, data management, and inter-institutional collaboration to promote transparency, efficiency, innovation, and knowledge sharing across the higher education sector.
- vi. **Develop and Retain Human Capital for Sustainable Quality** — Strengthen the competencies of faculty, administrators, and institutional leaders through structured professional development, mentorship, and recognition mechanisms, ensuring continuity and sustainability of quality systems

5. THE FIVE PILLARS OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

(Aligned with PSG-2023 and Addressing Key Challenges in Pakistani HEIs)

PILLAR I: GOOD GOVERNANCE & INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Rationale:

Governance and leadership are foundational to quality assurance. Many Pakistani DAIs face challenges such as inconsistent decision-making, weak institutional structures, and limited ownership of quality initiatives. This pillar ensures that institutional leadership is empowered, accountable, and strategic—embedding quality in every layer of governance. It addresses PSG-2023's call for **accountability, transparency, and enhancement-driven institutional management**.

Domain 1: Institutional Governance & Quality Leadership

Expected Outcomes

- Transparent and participatory governance ensuring integration of quality in all institutional functions.
- Active and empowered Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) guiding planning, monitoring, and review of QA activities.
- Leadership ownership and accountability in achieving institutional performance and quality targets.

Core Expectations

- Establish and operationalize an Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) that meets regularly to plan, monitor, and evaluate quality initiatives.
- Define and formalize the roles of the Vice Chancellor, Deans, Directors etc in institutional quality assurance and improvement processes.
- Ensure that findings from QA activities (such as self-assessments, surveys, and reviews) are used by university leadership in decision-making, policy formulation, and budget allocation to strengthen institutional effectiveness.
- Develop and maintain a transparent reporting and follow-up mechanism for IQC recommendations to ensure timely implementation and accountability.

Performance Indicators

- Verified record of IQC meetings, including agendas, minutes, and follow-up actions.
- Evidence of QA-related discussions and decisions documented in statutory body meetings (e.g., Syndicate, Academic Council).
- Inclusion of QA-driven priorities in institutional plans and budget documents.
- Annual progress report showing implementation status of IQC recommendations and leadership follow-up

Domain 2: Policy Frameworks and Institutional Effectiveness

Expected Outcomes

- Institutional policies are comprehensive, up to date, and aligned with PSG-2023, national regulations, and institutional priorities.
- A systematic policy cycle ensures formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring, and periodic review.
- Policies are digitally accessible, promoting transparency and institutional accountability.

Core Expectations

- Develop and maintain an Institutional Meta-Policy Framework defining the hierarchy, development process, and review timelines for all policies.
- Ensure each approved policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed regularly through documented evidence of compliance and impact.
- Establish a designated policy custodian or unit (e.g., Registrar Office or IQC Secretariat) responsible for coordination, version control, and updates.
- Maintain a digital policy repository or web portal accessible to faculty, staff, and students for reference and institutional transparency.

Performance Indicators

- Evidence of a comprehensive and updated policy inventory, with version dates and approval references.
- Documentation showing the policy cycle: formulation → approval → implementation → monitoring → review.
- Digital accessibility of institutional policies on the university website or intranet.

- Records of policy review meetings and implementation reports submitted to IQC or relevant committees.

PILLAR II: ACADEMIC QUALITY & PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Rationale:

Academic quality determines institutional credibility. This pillar ensures structured evaluation, and continuous improvement using RIPE and PREE frameworks. It responds to Pakistan’s key challenges—uneven program reviews, weak curriculum relevance, and lack of performance-based academic accountability.

Domain 3: Academic Quality & Program Enhancement

Expected Outcomes

- Academic programs are regularly evaluated using data-driven tools ensuring relevance, consistency, and continuous improvement.
- Corrective actions are effectively implemented based on findings from RIPE (Institutional Review and Performance Enhancement) and PREE (Program Review and Evaluation for Enhancement).
- Teaching and learning quality demonstrably improves through systematic monitoring and stakeholder feedback.

Core Expectations

- Conduct RIPE and reviews for all active programs based on PREE, supported by Corrective Action Reports (CARs) and documented follow-up.
- Maintain data-driven academic performance monitoring, including student achievement, course outcomes, etc.
- Collect and integrate feedback from students, alumni, employers, faculty and other stakeholders to improve curricula and teaching methods.
- Ensure that findings from academic reviews are used in curriculum revision, faculty development, and resource planning.

Performance Indicators

- Number and percentage of programs reviewed annually through PREE mechanisms.
- Evidence of approved CARs and their implementation status endorsed by IQC or relevant body.
- Improvements reflected in learning outcomes, student results, or accreditation reports.
- Documented use of feedback data in decision-making (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment reforms).

Domain 4: Curriculum Relevance, Outcomes Assessment & Accreditation

Expected Outcomes

- Curricula are aligned with national standards, market needs, and emerging global trends.

- Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are systematically assessed and used to improve student employability and innovation skills.
- Accreditation and NOC compliance is ensured across all programs, reinforcing institutional credibility.

Core Expectations

- Regularly conduct curriculum and course reviews through relevant forum, ensuring integration of new knowledge, technology, and skills.
- Regularly assess graduate outcomes, employer satisfaction, and alumni feedback to strengthen academic relevance.
- Maintain updated records of program accreditation, renewal cycles, and compliance with HEC/National Councils' requirements.
- Encourage faculty–industry consultation in curriculum design and periodic updates.

Performance Indicators

- Number and percentage of programs reviewed, updated, or revised annually.
- Evidence of compliance with accreditation/NOC standards and submission timelines.
- Documentation of employer and alumni feedback analysis with resulting curricular improvements.

Domain 5: Research, Innovation & Community Impact

Expected Outcomes

- Institutional research agendas are aligned with national development priorities.
- Enhanced research productivity through funded projects, publications, patents, and innovation outputs.
- Stronger linkages between academia, industry, and community lead to tangible social and economic impact.

Core Expectations

- Define and implement institutional research priorities consistent with national goals and institutional mission.
- Foster collaboration with industry, community organizations, and public sector bodies for applied and impactful research.
- Monitor and report research KPIs (publications, citations, patents, funded projects, commercialization outcomes).
- Promote research integrity and ethics, ensuring adherence to national and institutional codes.

Performance Indicators

- Annual count of research publications, funded projects, patents, and innovation outputs.
- Documented industry partnerships, community engagement projects, or consultancy outcomes.

- Evidence of research impact (policy inputs, commercialization, or community benefit).
- Participation of faculty and students in applied or interdisciplinary research

PILLAR III: STUDENT EXPERIENCE, SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT

Rationale

Student experience is the truest reflection of an institution's quality. In Pakistan, DAIs face persistent challenges such as weak student feedback systems, poor counseling and advisory services, minimal student representation in decision-making, inadequate grievance handling, and limited access to co-curricular and employability-enhancing opportunities. This pillar focuses on ensuring that institutions provide a supportive, safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where every student can thrive academically, personally, and professionally—fully aligning with PSG-2023's emphasis on student-centered learning and institutional responsiveness.

Domain 6: Student Voice, Representation & Empowerment

Expected Outcomes

- Institutionalized and effective platforms for student participation in academic, and quality-related decision-making.
- Transparent and inclusive communication channels between students and university leadership.
- Enhanced student ownership, trust, and sense of belonging within the institutional community. **Core Expectations**
- Formally establish student councils or representative bodies, ensuring participation in the relevant forums.
- Regularly conduct student forums to exchange views on academic and campus matters.
- Integrate student feedback and representation outcomes into institutional planning, policy, and academic review processes.

Performance Indicators

- Frequency and documentation of student representation forums and feedback mechanisms.
- Percentage of QA and governance committees with active student members.
- Number of institutional decisions, reforms, or policy updates informed by student feedback.

Domain 7: Student Support, Guidance & Well-Being

Expected Outcomes

- Establishment of a comprehensive and responsive student support system addressing academic, psychological, and career needs.
- Improved student progression, retention, and overall satisfaction through timely support and mentoring.

- A safe, inclusive, and gender-sensitive campus culture, fostering student well-being and personal growth.

Core Expectations

- Develop a Student Support Centre offering academic advising, counseling, and career guidance under qualified professionals.
- Provide mental-health and wellness services through trained counselors, peer mentoring, or referral partnerships.
- Ensure inclusive education policies and targeted support for students with disabilities, financial constraints, or special learning needs.
- Periodically review and publicize student support policies and grievance mechanisms.

Performance Indicators

- Ratio of advisors/counselors to enrolled students, disaggregated by campus or faculty.
- Utilization and satisfaction rates of counseling, advising, and career services.
- Documented retention and progression rates showing improvement trends.
- Annual student feedback on well-being, inclusivity, and support satisfaction.

Domain 8: Student Employability, Development & Engagement

Expected Outcomes

- Graduates demonstrate enhanced employability, professional readiness, and lifelong learning competencies.
- Strengthened industry-academia collaboration offering hands-on learning and exposure to real-world challenges.
- Expanded student engagement in leadership, innovation, and community service activities.

Core Expectations

- Develop and implement a Student Employability and Development Framework integrating internships, soft-skills training, and entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Facilitate career fairs, industry talks, and mentoring programs in collaboration with employers and alumni.
- Encourage student-led clubs, innovation challenges, volunteering, and civic engagement projects to enhance leadership and social responsibility.

Performance Indicators

- Graduate employability rate (within one year of graduation) and employer satisfaction data.
- Number of internship placements, community projects, and industry collaborations executed annually.
- Participation rates in student development programs, innovation challenges, and leadership events.
- Documented evidence of career guidance sessions and follow-up support.

PILLAR IV: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, COLLABORATION & QUALITY CULTURE DEVELOPMENT

Rationale

Modern higher education institutions cannot thrive without digital integration, collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement. In Pakistan, many DAIs still rely on manual systems, fragmented databases, and isolated quality initiatives, leading to inefficiency, duplication, and weak accountability. This pillar emphasizes the **digital enablement, collaborative networking, and institutionalization of quality culture** necessary to transform DAIs into transparent, data-driven, and innovation-oriented organizations — in line with **PSG-2023's focus on transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and sectoral collaboration**.

Domain 9: Digital Transformation, Data Governance & E-Enablement

Expected Outcomes

- Progressive integration of digital systems across academic, administrative, and QA operations to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability.
- Institutional decisions increasingly informed by reliable data analytics and automated reporting tools.
- Enhanced responsiveness, coordination, and service delivery through e-governance practices.

Core Expectations

- Develop and implement a Digital Transformation and Data Governance Framework appropriate to institutional size and capacity, ensuring standardization, security, and ethical data use.
- Adopt integrated management information systems (MIS/LMS/HRMIS)—or other scalable digital solutions—for data collection, storage, and reporting.
- Establish KPI dashboards for real-time monitoring of institutional and QA performance indicators.
- Gradually automate key QA and administrative processes such as surveys, selfassessments, documentation, and performance tracking.
- Provide training and technical support to enhance digital literacy and promote adoption among academic and administrative staff.

Performance Indicators

- Integration and functionality level of digital systems across academic, administrative, and QA operations — assessed as basic (stand-alone systems), developing (partially integrated), or advanced (fully interconnected and data-driven).
- Percentage of institutional reports, plans, and decisions generated through verified digital dashboards or data analytics tools, demonstrating use of evidence-based governance.
- Extent of automation in QA and administrative workflows (e.g., surveys, reporting, or approvals), verified through annual self-audit or system reports.

- Availability, accessibility, and frequency of updates in centralized digital repositories containing QA evidence, policies, and institutional data.
- Percentage of faculty and administrative staff trained and actively using digital platforms for academic management, QA processes, and institutional reporting.

Domain 10: Collaboration, Partnerships & Quality Culture Institutionalization

Expected Outcomes

- A culture of collaboration, shared learning, and continuous improvement embedded within the institution.
- Strengthened partnerships with national and international QA bodies and networks for benchmarking and capacity building.
- Active alumni, industry, and community engagement contributing to institutional development and student outcomes.

Core Expectations

- Develop institutional partnerships with *national and international QA networks*
- Establish structured *alumni and industry engagement systems* for mentorship, employability, and feedback.
- Organize *Quality Weeks, best-practice sharing seminars, and peer-learning forums* within and across DAIs.
- Promote internal *quality recognition systems* (awards, digital showcases, or innovation grants) to motivate staff and students.
- Foster *inter-institutional research and QA collaborations* to exchange knowledge and strengthen collective capacity.

Performance Indicators

- Number of MoUs, collaborative projects, or QA network memberships.
- Frequency and participation in quality-related events or training programs.
- Evidence of alumni or industry participation in institutional activities.
- Inclusion of institutional best practices in national or regional QA reports.

PILLAR V: FACULTY, STAFF & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Rationale:

Faculty, administrators, and decision-makers form the backbone of institutional quality. This pillar focuses on **capacity development, retention, and leadership growth** to ensure sustainability and consistency in QA practices.

Domain 11: Faculty Development, Retention & Recognition

Expected Outcomes

- A competent, motivated, and high-performing faculty contributing to teaching excellence, research, and community service.
- Institutionalized and continuous professional development (CPD) mechanisms aligned with academic and QA priorities.

- Improved faculty retention through supportive work environments and recognition systems.

Core Expectations

- Develop and implement an annual CPD and pedagogical training plan, covering instructional design, assessment, research skills, and technology integration.
- Ensure induction programs for newly appointed faculty and ongoing refresher trainings for existing staff.
- Establish a faculty recognition and reward framework linked with teaching innovation, research productivity, and institutional service.
- Maintain faculty workload balance, mentoring systems, and opportunities for career progression to enhance job satisfaction and retention.

Performance Indicators

- Percentage of faculty completing CPD or training programs annually, verified through attendance records or certificates.
- Faculty retention rate (percentage retained year-to-year) and satisfaction levels, measured through institutional surveys.
- Number and diversity of recognition initiatives (awards, incentives, commendations) implemented annually.
- Evidence of teaching and research improvement post-training, assessed through student feedback, peer review, or publication output.

Domain 12: Leadership & Administrative Capacity Building

Expected Outcomes

- Skilled, accountable, and forward-thinking academic and administrative leaders capable of driving institutional effectiveness.
- Strengthened shared governance through evidence-based and transparent decisionmaking processes.
- Enhanced institutional efficiency, coordination, and leadership continuity across departments and campuses.

Core Expectations

- Implement structured leadership and management development programs for Deans, HoDs, Registrars, and senior administrators, focusing on planning, financial management, and quality assurance.
- Conduct QA awareness and operational training for administrative and support staff to build ownership of quality processes.
- Introduce succession planning and mentoring mechanisms to ensure leadership continuity and institutional memory.
- Integrate leadership performance reviews into annual evaluation systems to promote accountability and improvement.

Performance Indicators

- Number and percentage of leadership and management personnel trained annually, verified through participation and completion records.
- Quality and frequency of decision-making forums (Academic Council, Boards, Committees) with documented minutes showing evidence-based decisions.
- Results of leadership and management performance evaluations, demonstrating improvement in planning, coordination, and execution.
- Institutional evidence of succession planning or mentoring initiatives, such as internal promotions or leadership pipelines established.

✓ Weightage

Pillar	Total Marks	Focus Area
Pillar I – Good Governance & Institutional Leadership	20	Strengthening institutional foundation
Pillar II – Academic Quality & Program Effectiveness	25	Enhancing academic standards and research outcomes
Pillar III – Student Experience, Support & Engagement	15	Building student-centered, inclusive institutions
Pillar IV – Digital Transformation, Collaboration & Quality Culture Development	20	Promoting data-driven, transparent, collaborative practices
Pillar	Total Marks	Focus Area
Pillar V – Faculty, Staff & Leadership Development	20	Ensuring sustainability through capacity and human capital
Total	100	

▨ Rationale for Distribution

- The **heaviest weight (25%)** is on *Academic Quality & Program Effectiveness*, as this reflects the core mandate of HEIs.
- Equal emphasis (**20% each**) is placed on *Governance*, *Digitalization/Collaboration*, and *Faculty Development*—all crucial for long-term institutional maturity.
- *Student Experience* receives **15%**, balancing feasibility with growing importance under PSG-2023's student-centric reforms.

6. QAA'S ONGOING ENGAGEMENT AND ADAPTIVE SUPPORT FOR DAIS

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) will maintain a structured and continuous engagement mechanism with all Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) to strengthen internal quality assurance (IQA) practices and foster a culture of evidence-based continuous improvement across Pakistan's higher education sector.

This engagement will include consultative meetings, workshops, capacity-building programs, peer learning forums, and institutional review sessions held periodically throughout the year to promote shared understanding, capability enhancement, and cross-institutional learning.

Recognizing the diverse capacities and maturity levels of Pakistani DAIs, as well as the evolving global QA landscape, QAA will adopt a flexible and evidence-informed approach. Parameters, expectations, and weightages within each domain will be periodically reviewed based on institutional performance trends, national priorities, and stakeholder feedback. While the overall weightage of each core pillar will remain stable to maintain strategic continuity, domain-level weightages and targets will be adjusted annually to reflect institutional progress and emerging sectoral needs.

Each year, QAA will issue an Annual Guidance and Performance Expectation Framework, providing:

- Updated benchmarks, performance indicators, and priority/focus area under each domain;
- Clear evidence requirements and reporting formats for institutional self-assessment; and
- Timelines for submission, review, validation, and feedback cycles.

This adaptive and collaborative model ensures that the Internal QA Assessment Framework remains:

- Contextually relevant to institutional diversity, size, and capacity across Pakistan;
- Enhancement-driven, prioritizing improvement, innovation, and institutional ownership over compliance; and
- Aligned with PSG-2023, promoting inclusivity, transparency, and evidence-based decision-making at all levels.

Through this sustained engagement, QAA aims to cultivate a nationally coherent yet flexible QA ecosystem, enabling each institution to progress at its own pace and maturity level while contributing to shared national standards of academic excellence and institutional effectiveness

7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT MECHANISM FOR DAIS

(Aligned with the Five Pillars of Internal Quality Assurance and PSG-2023)

The Annual Performance Assessment Mechanism ensures that each Degree Awarding Institution (DAI) is evaluated in a fair, transparent, and evidence-based manner, consistent with national quality priorities and PSG-2023 outcomes. The purpose of this mechanism is not regulatory compliance, but performance enhancement, institutional learning, and continuous improvement.

a. Annual QA Planning and Target Setting

- At the beginning of each year (July–August), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) will issue the Annual Guidance, outlining expectations, weightages, and evidence requirements under each pillar and domain.

- Dynamic weightages will be assigned annually based on national priorities, institutional maturity, and emerging higher-education challenges.
- Each DAI will prepare an **Institutional Quality Plan (IQP)**, approved by its Institutional Quality Circle (IQC), aligning its internal QA initiatives with the defined benchmarks and timelines.

b. Evidence-Based Self-Reporting by DAIs

- Every DAI shall submit an **Annual Quality Performance Report (AQPR)**, approved by the Head of Institution and the IQC.
- The AQPR will include, but not be limited to:
 - Documentary evidence against each domain benchmark
 - Summary of IQC meetings, decisions, and progress reviews.
 - Actions taken under RIPE, PREE, and other QA mechanisms.
 - Stakeholder feedback, KPIs, digital data, and improvement records.
 - Evidence of faculty, staff, and student participation in QA processes.

c. QAA Review and Scoring

- QAA will conduct an **annual desk review** using a standardized QA Scorecard aligned with the five pillars and active domains.
- Each domain will be scored on evidence quality, implementation depth, and measurable impact.
- Review teams comprising QAA officers and trained peer reviewers will evaluate authenticity, completeness, and effectiveness.
- Digital dashboards and automated data systems will support transparent and consistent scoring.

d. Validation through Peer or On-Site Review

- To ensure transparency and credibility, QAA may conduct:
 - Virtual validation sessions for clarifications or evidence checks.
 - On-site reviews selected through random sampling or performance-based triggers.
 - Peer Review Evaluations involving certified QA professionals from other DAIs to validate findings and share best practices.

e. Feedback, Scoring, and Dissemination

- A Provisional Institutional Scorecard will be shared with each DAI for factual corrections within 10–15 days.
- QAA will then issue the Final Institutional Scorecard, reflecting verified performance on all domains.
- Consolidated national and regional results will be presented in an Annual QA Performance Report, published through QAA's digital dashboard to promote transparency and shared learning.

f. Incentives and Targeted Capacity Building

- High-performing DAIs will be recognized through national QA awards, public acknowledgment, and potential financial or regulatory incentives.
- Institutions requiring support will receive structured mentoring, training, and developmental assistance focusing on weak domains.
- The approach is supportive—not punitive—encouraging continuous improvement, self-reflection, and institutional maturity.

g. Continuous Improvement and Policy Feedback

- Data and insights from annual assessments will inform QAA's policy refinement and guidance cycle.
- Best practices and emerging challenges will shape the next year's Annual Guidance, ensuring that QA expectations remain contextually relevant, inclusive, and enhancement-driven.

7.1 FIVE-YEAR ROLLING QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

To ensure strategic continuity and sustained quality development, QAA will devise a **Five-Year Rolling Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Assessment Cycle**. This model aligns with PSG2023's emphasis on evidence-based, performance-oriented, and institutionally owned quality assurance.

a. Five-Year Strategic Guidance Framework

- QAA will issue a **Five-Year Strategic Guidance Framework** at the start of each cycle, defining broad national priorities, developmental milestones, and expected outcomes under each of the five QA pillars.
- This framework will act as a **facilitative roadmap**, allowing DAIs to design their own internal QA strategies consistent with national goals.
- Each DAI may adapt these directions according to its governance, academic portfolio, financial strength, and maturity level.

b. Annual Operational Guidance and Adaptive Targets

- QAA will issue **Annual Operational Guidance and Target Matrices** translating longterm priorities into actionable yearly objectives.
- These directives are **illustrative, not prescriptive**—encouraging DAIs to set contextappropriate priorities and evidence standards.
- DAIs will reflect these in their Institutional Quality Plans (IQPs) to ensure ownership and relevance.

c. Adaptive Implementation and Mid-Cycle Review

- QAA will review DAIs' Annual Quality Performance Reports (AQPRs) to monitor progress and identify emerging trends.

- Based on evidence, QAA may issue supplementary advisories or adjust indicators to address evolving challenges such as digital readiness, research ethics, or inclusivity.
- A Mid-Cycle Review (Year 3) will be conducted to evaluate collective sectoral progress and refine guidance for the remaining years of the cycle.

d. Cumulative Evaluation and Developmental Categorization

- Over the five-year cycle, QAA will compile annual results to measure institutional growth, consistency, and sustainability.
- In Year 5, a Comprehensive Institutional Review will assess maturity and alignment with PSG-2023.
- DAIs will be categorized developmentally, in line with PSG-2023's progressive enhancement model, reflecting QA integration and innovation achieved.
- Categorization will be used for mentoring and support to foster improvement and transparency.

e. Continuous Learning and Renewal

- Lessons from each cycle will inform the next **Five-Year Framework**, with revised benchmarks and improvement targets based on evidence and sectoral evolution.
- This rolling model ensures that the national QA system remains adaptive, forwardlooking, and continuously improving.

f. Implementation Flexibility

The guidance and targets provided under this framework are intended to facilitate and support, not restrict, institutional action. Each DAI is encouraged to contextualize these expectations according to its academic focus, governance structure, available resources, and maturity level. QAA will evaluate progress relative to institutional capacity, commitment, and improvement, rather than uniform compliance.

Glossary of Key Terms

Accreditation — Formal recognition that an academic program or institution meets prescribed quality standards set by HEC or relevant professional councils.

Annual Quality Performance Report (AQPR) — The yearly self-assessment report submitted by DAIs to QAA, documenting evidence of performance against each domain.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) — A systematic, data-driven process aimed at ongoing enhancement of institutional performance, teaching, learning, and governance.

Corrective Action Report (CAR) — A documented plan outlining actions taken by the institution to address gaps or weaknesses identified in self-assessment or external reviews.

Degree Awarding Institution (DAI) — Any university or institution authorized by HEC to award academic degrees at undergraduate or postgraduate level.

Domain — A thematic area under each pillar representing specific functions or processes of internal quality assurance (e.g., governance, teaching, student support).

E-Enablement — The use of digital tools and electronic systems to enhance academic, administrative, and QA functions, enabling transparency and efficiency.

Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) — A formal institutional body responsible for planning, monitoring, and evaluating quality enhancement activities at the university level.

Institutional Quality Plan (IQP) — The annual plan prepared by each DAI aligning its internal QA priorities and actions with QAA's guidance and PSG-2023 outcomes.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) — A set of institutional mechanisms ensuring that programs, services, and operations meet quality standards and continuously improve.

Management Information System (MIS) — A digital platform integrating academic, administrative, and QA data to support evidence-based decision-making.

Peer Review — Evaluation conducted by trained QA professionals or reviewers from other DAIs to validate institutional self-assessment findings.

Program Review and Evaluation for Enhancement (PREE) — The structured process for assessing academic programs' relevance, quality, and outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.

Quality Assurance (QA) — A systematic approach to maintaining and enhancing the quality of higher education through planned policies, procedures, and assessment mechanisms.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) — A specialized body within HEC responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring national QA frameworks and standards.

Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) — The internal unit within a DAI responsible for executing QA policies, coordinating self-assessments, and liaising with QAA.

Quality Maturity Classification — A categorization of DAIs based on their performance trends, institutional learning, and degree of QA system integration (e.g., Developing, Progressive, Mature).

RIPE (Review and Institutional Performance Enhancement) — The institutional self-assessment mechanism for evaluating performance against defined quality benchmarks.

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) — The report prepared at program level documenting compliance with academic quality standards and improvement plans.

Stakeholders — Individuals or groups directly or indirectly affected by the institution's performance, including students, faculty, employers, alumni, and regulatory bodies.

Weightage — The relative importance or numerical value assigned to each pillar or domain for performance scoring and evaluation.